

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-4 (Cancelled)

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5. (New) A sheet delivery device for a sheet-fed press in which printed sheets, conveyed by a sheet conveyor in a sheet moving direction, are sequentially stacked on a pallet, said sheet delivery device comprising:

a sheet separating device operable to create a separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and subsequently conveyed printed sheets by temporarily receiving an end portion of the subsequently conveyed printed sheets; and

a shutter device arranged to be inserted into the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets created by said sheet separating device so as to temporarily receive printed sheets conveyed by the sheet conveyor for enabling replacement of a filled pallet with a vacant pallet,

wherein said shutter device comprises:

endless conveying members disposed in a spaced-apart, parallel relation to be disposed on both sides of the sequentially stacked printed sheets, and arranged to be movable in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a shutter bar unit connected to and spanning between respectively opposing portions of said endless conveying members,

wherein said endless conveying members are operable to move said shutter bar unit between an operation position, in which said shutter bar unit is inserted into the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets created by said sheet separating device, and a standby position in which said shutter bar unit is not disposed in the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets

created by said sheet separating device and allows the subsequently printed sheets to drop through a space between said endless conveying members and onto the pallet.

6. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 5, wherein said endless conveying members comprise endless chains.

7. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 6, wherein said shutter bar unit further comprises:

a plurality of roller attachments supported by said endless chains and adjacently arranged side-by-side in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a plurality of rollers arranged such that each end of each of said plurality of rollers is attached, via a bearing, to one of said plurality of roller attachments.

8. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 7, further comprising:

a sheet delivery table arranged to support the pallet and operable to incrementally move between a raised position and a lowered position so as to maintain a specified distance between the sheet conveyor and a most recently sequentially stacked printed sheet.

9. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 5, wherein said endless conveying members comprise endless belts.

10. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 9, wherein said shutter bar unit further comprises:

a plurality of roller attachments supported by said endless belts and adjacently arranged side-by-side in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a plurality of rollers arranged such that each end of each of said plurality of rollers is attached, via a bearing, to one of said plurality of roller attachments.

11. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 10, further comprising:

a sheet delivery table arranged to support the pallet and operable to incrementally move between a raised position and a lowered position so as to maintain a specified distance between the sheet conveyor and a most recently sequentially stacked printed sheet.

12. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 5, further comprising:

a sheet delivery table arranged to support the pallet and operable to incrementally move between a raised position and a lowered position so as to maintain a specified distance between the sheet conveyor and a most recently sequentially stacked printed sheet.

13. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 5, further comprising a plate receiving device comprising movable rails arranged to be disposed on both sides of the sequentially stacked printed sheets and in a spaced-apart parallel relation to the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor, and arranged to be disposed below said shutter bar unit when said shutter bar unit is arranged in the operation position, wherein

said movable rails are operable to move between a receive position for receiving a sheet separator for permanently separating the sequentially stacked printed sheets, in which said movable rails are arranged to receive and support the sheet separator, and a deliver position for delivering the sheet separator, in which said movable rails are operable to move apart in a direction orthogonal to the sheet moving direction of the sheet conveyor so as to increase the distance between said moving rails and release the sheet separator.

14. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 5, wherein said sheet separating device further comprises a belt-like blade operable to move above and across an entire width of the sequentially stacked sheets in a direction orthogonal to the sheet moving direction of the sheet conveyor for temporarily receiving and supporting the end portion of the printed sheets subsequently conveyed and dropped by the sheet conveyor for creating the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets.

15. (New) A sheet delivery device for a sheet-fed press in which printed sheets are sequentially stacked on a removable pallet arranged on a sheet delivery table, said sheet delivery device comprising:

a sheet conveyor operable to continuously and sequentially stack the sheets by conveying the printed sheets in a sheet moving direction and dropping the printed sheets into the sequential stack;

a sheet separating device for creating a separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and subsequently conveyed printed sheets, said sheet separating device comprising:

a belt-like blade arranged to move between:

an operation position, in which said belt-like blade is arranged above and across an entire width of the sequentially stacked printed sheets in a direction orthogonal to the sheet moving direction of said sheet conveyor for temporarily receiving and supporting an end portion of the printed sheets subsequently conveyed and dropped by said sheet conveyor, for creating the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets, and

a standby position, in which said belt-like blade is not arranged above and across the entire width of the sequentially stacked printed sheets, wherein

said sheet separating device is operable to move said belt-like blade into the operation position upon a determination that the removable pallet is a filled pallet; and

a shutter device arranged to be inserted into the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets created by said sheet separating device, when said belt-like blade is arranged in the operating position, so as to temporarily receive printed sheets conveyed by said sheet conveyor.

16. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 15, wherein said endless conveying members comprise endless chains.

17. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 16, wherein said shutter bar unit further comprises:

a plurality of roller attachments supported by said endless chains and adjacently arranged side-by-side in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a plurality of rollers arranged such that each end of each of said plurality of rollers is attached, via a bearing, to one of said plurality of roller attachments.

18. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 15, wherein said endless conveying members comprise endless belts.

19. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 18, wherein said shutter bar unit further comprises:

a plurality of roller attachments supported by said endless belts and adjacently arranged side-by-side in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a plurality of rollers arranged such that each end of each of said plurality of rollers is attached, via a bearing, to one of said plurality of roller attachments.

20. (New) The sheet delivery device of Claim 15, further comprising a plate receiving device comprising movable rails arranged in a spaced-apart parallel relation to be disposed on both sides of the sequentially stacked printed sheets and in parallel to the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor, and arranged to be disposed below said shutter bar unit when said shutter bar unit is arranged in the operation position, wherein

said movable rails are operable to move between a receive position for receiving a sheet separator for permanently separating the sequentially stacked printed sheets, in which said movable rails are arranged to receive and support the sheet separator, and a deliver position for delivering the sheet separator, in which said movable rails are operable to move apart in a direction orthogonal to the sheet moving direction of the sheet conveyor so as to increase the distance between said moving rails and release the sheet separator.

21. (New) The sheet deliver device of Claim 15, wherein said shutter device further comprises:

endless conveying members disposed in a spaced-apart, parallel relation to be disposed on both sides of the sequentially stacked printed sheets, and arranged to be movable in the sheet conveying direction of the sheet conveyor; and

a shutter bar unit connected to and spanning between respectively opposing portions of said endless conveying members,

wherein said endless conveying members are operable to move said shutter bar unit between an operation position, in which said shutter bar unit is inserted into the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets created by said belt-like blade, and a standby position in which said shutter bar unit is not disposed in the separation between the sequentially stacked printed sheets and the subsequently conveyed printed sheets created by said belt-like blade and allows the subsequently printed sheets to drop through a space between said endless conveying members and onto the pallet.